

OUR TOWN

A Digital Newsletter from the Town of Dover, MA

VOL. 2, NO. 4.2, TOWN MEETING SPECIAL, APRIL 2023

Town Meeting Special

2023

This is our last weekly Town Meeting newsletter before the Annual Town Meeting next Monday May 1st. We hope you have found them useful. If you would like to provide feedback please click [here](#). If you haven't already signed up to receive the monthly Town Newsletter you can sign up [here](#), then scroll down the list and click on 'I Dover Town News'.

CITIZEN'S PETITION



Article 28: What is a Citizens' Petition and What is the purpose of this one?

In Massachusetts, 10 registered voters can bring just about any matter before Town Meeting for consideration (100 registered voters are required to bring a matter before a Special Town Meeting). This is called a Citizens' Petition. This year, a group of registered voters is asking Town Meeting to approve funds to build a sidewalk on Cross Street, from Centre Street to the Chickering Elementary School. The petitioners estimate the cost to be \$45,000 and will explain their request in more detail at Town Meeting.

MORE QUESTIONS ANSWERED...

Article 3- Why does the Town have Revolving Funds?

The Town has Revolving Funds which pay for certain programs and services based on the fees charged (such as a Council on Aging trip or a septic inspection for a new house under construction). That is, the fee covers 100% of the expenses to deliver the service or program. Because the Town never knows exactly how much it will be collect in fees, the vote by Town Meeting is the upper limit allowed, unless it is subsequently increased by a vote of the Board of Selectmen and Warrant Committee. In any case, the department operating these programs is never allowed to spend more than the amount they collect in fees.



Why are Articles 8,9, 10 and 11 approved as a group?

There is a small group of Articles that recur every year and are generally non substantive in nature. To try to complete all of the Town's business in one night, we group these Articles (4 of them this year) together and ask Town Meeting to vote them in one vote. Town Meeting retains the option, however, of voting any of them individually and/or asking questions concerning any in this group.

Why are Articles 7, 16 and 17 being dismissed?

There are three Articles this year that the proponents no longer have an interest in. Since these three Articles are 'legally' before the Town Meeting to consider, only Town Meeting can vote to dismiss them as no longer being necessary. Again, Town Meeting retains the option of voting any of them individually and/or asking questions concerning any in this group.

Article 12 - What is a Stabilization Fund and how much is currently in it?

A Stabilization Fund is a type of 'rainy day' financial reserve. It is meant to be a financial cushion for the Town to use during a recession when the Town's revenues growth may slow or decrease, or to offset extraordinary, unanticipated costs (think COVID, but without the federal government providing financial support). The financial plan approved by the Selectmen, Warrant Committee and Capital Budget Committee, which was presented to Town Meeting last year, calls for the Town to reserve 4% of its revenues in the Stabilization Fund (and 4% in its Free Cash reserve fund), and to accomplish this over a four-year period. The current balance in the Stabilization fund is \$950,000 and the Town's target is to reach the 4% goal in FY26.

Article 13- What is an Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Stabilization Fund and how much is currently in it?

The OPEB Stabilization Fund is a type of savings account meant to fund Dover's portion of health insurance benefits for retirees of the Dover-Sherborn Schools. The Town's OPEB liability for these school employees is approximately \$13,000,000 and Dover's financial plan calls for the Town to fund 60% of this liability over a 10-year period. Fortunately, the Town's OPEB liability for Town and Chickering employees is nearly fully funded, thanks to the actions of Town Meeting in prior years.

Article 15- What are 'unpaid bills'?

On occasion, the Town has a bill from a vendor that did not get paid before June 30, the end of the Town's fiscal year. Sometimes the bill was submitted late by the vendor, so the deadline was missed. In order for the Town to pay these bills, State law requires Town Meeting to authorize the payment, by a 4/5 vote.

Article 26- What is a 'demand fee'?

A demand fee (not a name we would select but found in State law) is a type of late fee charged by the Town in cases when a real estate bill or motor vehicle excise bill is not paid on time. Under State law, the amount of this fee must be approved by Town Meeting. Many years ago, this late fee was set at \$5. Today, this \$5 late fee does not cover the extra costs the Town incurs in collecting late payments. The Town surveyed 50 other cities and towns and the average demand fee is \$15, which is what the Town is recommending that Town Meeting approve. Under State law, the maximum demand fee Town Meeting can approve is \$30.

FEEDBACK

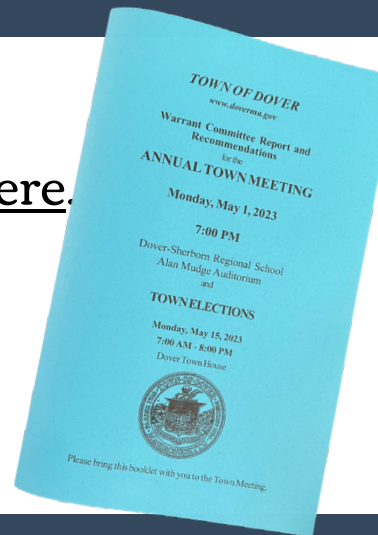


We would love to hear your feedback on these newsletters, please click here to complete a short form. Thank you!

Thank you!

**THANK YOU FOR READING!
SEE YOU AT THE TOWN
MEETING ON
MAY 1, AT 7PM
DOVER SHERBORN REGIONAL
SCHOOL, ALAN MUDGE
AUDITORIUM**

Don't forget to bring your blue book to the Town Meeting with you. Misplaced it? Download it [here](#). Please download it prior to arrival at Town Meeting. There will also be additional handouts at Town Meeting to supplement the information on Articles 2, 4 and 5.



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